

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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TAGS: TH,

SUBJECT: ACTIVITIES OF MACTHAI TRAINING AND
LOGISTICS DETACHMENT

THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS HAVE BEEN PREPARED BY DOD ON AN
ARTICLE BY JOHN BURGESS IN THE WASHINGTON POST, JUNE 13,
1974, WHICH HAS BEEN TRANSMITTED TO EMBASSY BY WIRELESS
FILE.

1. THE MACTHAI TRAINING & LOGISTICS DETACHMENT (TLD) WAS
ESTABLISHED IN NOVEMBER 1973 WHEN DET 1, 56TH SOW, WHICH
HAD BEEN PROVIDING TRAINING FOR LAOTIAN AND CAMBODIAN AIR
PERSONNEL, WAS INTEGRATED INTO THE MACTHAI ORGANIZATION.
THE ACTIVITIES OF DET 1 IN TRAINING LAOTIAN AND KHMER AIR
FORCE PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN A MATTER OF PUBLIC RECORD IN THE
MOOSE AND LOWENSTEIN REPORTS OF MAY 1972 AND JUNE 1973.
THERE HAS BEEN NO ATTEMPT ON THE PART OF THE USG TO WITH-
HOLD INFORMATION CONCERNING ACTIVITIES OF THAT DETACHMENT.

2. THE ARTICLE REFERS TO THE DEATH OF VILLAGERS ON BOMBING
RANGES WHERE LAOTIAN AND CAMBODIAN PILOTS HAVE BEEN PRAC-
TICING. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION REGARDING THIS ALLEGED
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INCIDENT; HOWEVER, VILLAGERS HAVE BEEN KILLED IN THE PAST

ON BOMBING RANGES IN THAILAND BECAUSE DESPITE FENCES AND POSTED WARNINGS, THEY STILL PERSIST IN ENTERING RANGES TO GATHER SCRAP METAL FOR RESALE.

3. THE ARTICLE STATES THAT THE TLD HAS A TOTAL OF 385 AMERICAN PERSONNEL WHICH IS CORRECT.

4. THE ARTICLE STATES THAT THE LAOTIAN AND CAMBODIAN PILOTS HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN T-28'S WHICH IS CORRECT.

5. THE ARTICLE STATES THAT THERE ARE BETWEEN 70 AND 80 CAMBODIANS AND ABOUT 70 LAOTIANS IN THE TRAINING PROGRAM. AS OF 13 JUNE THERE WERE 69 CAMBODIAN PERSONNEL AND 10 LAOTIANS IN TRAINING BY THE TLD. THESE NUMBERS FLUCTUATE DEPENDING ON COURSE REQUIREMENTS.

6. THE ARTICLE STATES THAT AN EMBASSY SPOKESMAN WAS UNABLE TO DETERMINE THE SOURCE OF FUNDING FOR THE TRAINING. TRAINING COSTS OF CAMBODIAN PERSONNEL ARE FUNDED FROM THE CAMBODIAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. TRAINING COSTS FOR LAOTIAN PERSONNEL ARE FUNDED FROM THE LAOS MASF PROGRAM WHICH WILL CONVERT TO MAP ON 1 JULY 1974.

7. THE ARTICLE STATES THAT, DURING A VISIT TO UDORN BY JOURNALISTS IN FEBRUARY, THE LATTER WERE DENIED PERMISSION TO VISIT THE AREA OF OPERATIONS OF THE T&L DETACHMENT. THIS IS CORRECT. THE VISIT HAD BEEN SCHEDULED FOR THE PURPOSE OF WRITING ON USAF OPERATIONAL UNITS AT UDORN AND HAD BEEN CLEARED BY THE RTG ACCORDINGLY. AT NO AIR BASE IN THAILAND ARE JOURNALISTS GIVEN FREE REIN TO ALL AREAS ON A BASE.

8. THE ARTICLE ASSERTS THAT CAMBODIAN TROOPS ARE TRAINED BY THAI ARMED FORCES IN THAILAND. THIS IS CORRECT AND HAS BEEN A MATTER OF PUBLIC RECORD IN THE MOOSE AND LOWENSTEIN REPORTS OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS.

9. COMMENT: THE TRAINING OF LAOTIAN AND CAMBODIAN AIR PERSONNEL BY U.S. PERSONNEL AT UDORN IS NOT NEWS NOR IS ANYTHING ELSE IN THE STORY AS FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE.
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OSD/PA IS PREPARED IF ASKED TO MAKE ALL THE POINTS LISTED ABOVE ON THE RECORD SINCE THEY HAVE ALL BEEN ON THE RECORD BEFORE.

10. THERE WAS NO DOD PRESS BRIEFING JUNE 13 OR 14 AND THIS SUBJECT WAS NOT RAISED AT STATE DEPARTMENT BRIEFING. HOWEVER, FOLLOWING IS STATE DEPARTMENT PRESS GUIDANCE SHOULD QUESTIONS BE ASKED: BEGIN TEXT. THERE IS NO

"SECRET" TRAINING PROGRAM. THE FACTS HAVE BEEN SET FORTH
IN THE PUBLIC RECORD. THE PROGRAM HAS BEEN DISCUSSED BY
DEFENSE OFFICIALS IN TESTIMONY ON THE HILL, HAS BEEN
COVERED IN AT LEAST ONE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE STAFF

REPORT, AND HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY REPORTED BY YOUR COLLEAGUES
IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

WE HAVE A PROGRAM TRAINING LIMITED NUMBERS OF CAMBODIAN
AIR FORCE PERSONNEL AND EVEN SMALLER NUMBERS OF LAO PER-
SONNEL. THESE PROGRAMS ARE CARRIED IN THE DOD BUDGETS
UNDER THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR BOTH COUNTRIES
AND THE PROGRAM IS CONDUCTED WITH THE FULL AWARENESS AND
CONSENT OF THE THAI GOVERNMENT. (IF THEY WANT FURTHER
DETAILS, THEY SHOULD APPROPRIATELY OBTAIN THEM FROM THE
PENTAGON.) END TEXT. SISCO

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